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NEWSLETTER: January/February 1995

FIRST 1995 FILM NIGHT - FEBRUARY 13

We start the New Year with a programme packed with stars!

Main Feature: "THE BELLS OF ST.MARY'S" 1945 Rainbow-RKO

A surefire winner, with its combination of three major Academy-Award-winners in producer-director LEO McCAREY, BING, and INGRID BERGMAN. (Ably supported by Henry Travers, William Gargan, and Ruth Donnelly).

After the runaway success of "Going My Way," McCarey had no trouble in rounding up the finance for this production, and the confidence was justified in that unlike many sequels, this was not a disappointment. On the contrary, its box-office returns greatly exceeded those of the earlier film, and it also gained critical acclaim, especially for the inspired teaming of Bing, in a reprise of his GMW "Father O'Malley" character, and the superb Ingrid Bergman.

The music content included the title tune (originally written in 1917 for an English musical-comedy) - James Burke & Jimmy van Heusen's AREN'T YOU GLAD YOU'RE YOU, Christmas favourite ADESTE FIDELES (O Come All Ye Faithful), IN THE LAND OF BEGINNING AGAIN (Clarke/Meyer) and "IT'S SPRING" sung in Swedish by Ingrid Bergman.

Incidentally the film gained four Academy Award nominations for 1945 - Best Picture, Best Director, Best Actor & Best Actress. The copy we will be using has an extra 10 minutes of movie not shown in the local TV version.

Supporting Feature: A special feature "THE LAST GREAT VAUDEVILLE SHOW" - a nostalgic melange of great songs and performers from the past guided by DEBBIE REYNOLDS as Sophie Tucker and DONALD O'CONNOR as George M.Cohan. Something different - and vastly entertaining.

START TIME: 7.15 P.M.

VENUE: As usual, the GRIERSON THEATRE - approached from the back entrance off Treasury Place, City (with its own private free car park)

(The "doorkeepers" thank you for your co-operation on our last night, and hope that where possible, correct or near-correct money be offered to avoid problems with change).

1995 FILM NIGHT DATES:

Feb.13 (See above)	May 8
June 19	August 14
October 9	December 4

NEW MEMBERS. We welcome ROBERT ROBSON, ROGER SYMONS, GEORGE and VERNA SIMMONS, and SHAUN MAYERS. Shaun, here from South Africa to study at Melbourne University and complete a thesis on Bing Crosby, thanks members for their hospitality in December, and looks forward to enjoying further film nights with us. Also good to hear from STAN BELLCHAMBERS, from Seven Hills in New South Wales, who has renewed membership and plans to visit Melbourne and be at the Grierson on February 13.

A letter from GEORGE O'REILLY, producer of "Golden Olden Recordings" at his base in St.James Terrace, Malahide, Co.Dublin, brought greetings for Christmas and 1995, and a promise to forward copies of the "Remembering Bing" brochures he uses in his Crosby lectures, for distribution to members here. Something to look forward to, as it's an excellent 14-page brochure, with a good selection of photographs, and interesting general information. Many thanks George!

Congratulations to the INTERNATIONAL CROSBY CIRCLE, founded in England 45 years ago, on the fine turnout at its 29th.Annual Dinner/Meeting, held in Leeds last October.
For anyone interested in becoming a member of the ICC, Bob Neate has Membership Application Forms. The fee is $30 per year, and three "BING" magazines a year (April/August/December) are a continuing source of information on Bing's 50-year career, and on recent CD, book and video releases.

English news also includes advice that John McNicholas has resumed production of the CHRONOLOGICAL BING CROSBY series - this time on CD, and without the "alternative takes" which occupied much of the content of the previous releases on LP.and brought some criticism.
The first CD was scheduled for English release in November, priced at approx.£10stlg.plus pp. It covered the period April 23 to December 9, 1932, and among 23 classic tracks are HOW DEEP IS THE OCEAN, PLEASE, SWEET GEORGIA BROWN, SOME OF THESE DAYS, BROTHER CAN YOU SPARE A DIME, and HERE LIES LOVE.
For anyone wanting to order direct, John's address is PO BOX 212, HARROW, MIDDLESEX, HA3 7LD, ENGLAND. (JONZO RECORDS JZ CD 08. UK)

Or talk to Bob Neate, as the VBCS has taken out an ICC membership.

LATE NEWS
SEE LATEST
ADVICE ON
PAGE 3
RE THIS
RELEASE.....

From AMERICA, come reports that there seems to be a big resurgence in interest in Bing, with a spate of record and video releases, and a lot of exposure in TV film channels. This augurs well for Australia, as we should see a good proportion of the CD's and videos. Keep asking!

There's a whisper that Reader's Digest USA is carrying out a feasibility study to see if it's worthwhile issuing a Bing Crosby CD, and if they find in favour of doing so they hope to issue material from their previous record sets "Bing Sings" or "Bing Sings Again."

It's also reported that Castle Communications, based in Sydney, have big plans for Bing releases in 1995. This could be helped by the fact that MCA (USA) which has been refusing to release Decca material, was due for a major re-organisation in January, and that out of this re-organisation could come the release of some very worthwhile tracks, including many not previously available on commercial discs.

Also interesting to see that the famous DECCA label, which has not had a release since 1973, is to be re-instated as a separate label from MCA.
Current plans are that it will primarily feature Country and Western performers, but there is talk of a possible TV Special to commemmorate Decca's 60th. Anniversary. Let's hope it eventuates as Bing and his huge involvement in establishing the label as an industry leader, would have to be heavily featured.

And on the home front, it was nice to see KENNY WEIR, of the Sunday Herald Sun's sound reviewing team, list "BING CROSBY - HIS LEGENDARY YEARS 1931 TO 1957" as the top of "The Best 10 CD'S of 1994," with the annotation:- "Some of the best pop music ever made - four CD's, 101 tracks and a superb booklet."

A MEMORIAL SERVICE was held in June '94 for KEN TWISS, the founder and president of the Bing Crosby Historical Society, who died in December 1993. The service was conducted in the Bing Crosby Rose Garden at Tacoma's Port Defiance Park, and a special bench and marker, funded by BCHS members and friends, was erected in the Garden.

Another memorial of note was seen in "Variety." 1994 was the 11th.year that ICC member John Marshall has raised funds to finance a display ad in America's "Show Business Bible," to commemorate the anniversary of Bing's death. The "copy" read:- "The BING Anniversary. The Bright Light in a Dark World. Harry Lillis Crosby May 3, 1903 - October 14, 1977. From World-wide "Crosbyana."

PERSONAL: Congratulations to Bob Neate, who hit the ranks of the septuagenarians on January 31st. Hope it was a happy 70th.birthday, Bob.

Felicitations to Peter Green, of Kelso, Tasmania, who journeys to the mainland for our film nights. Incidentally, Peter has nearly 100 CD's of Bing - a great investment for listening pleasure.

And imprecations on the nine members who have not yet paid their annual fees. The Treasurer is threatening to publish a black list. (Only joking - we think!)

Hate to say it Peter, but you are one of the 9. Regards Bob Neate

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STOP PRESS:-
Letter just rec'd from John McNicholas to advise that the announcement of the release of the first CD continuing his Chronological Series of Bing's recordings was premature. The disc will not be ready for release, hopefully sometime in March, and when it is, John will advise me as to cost and postage charges. However he has issued a somewhat sad (to me) reminder to us all, that he will pressing 500 copies of the CD, which if sold, will mean the continuation of the project. If he cannot recoup his outlay then that will mean the end of the project, as he cannot afford to lose any more money... He goes on to say that he lost a small fortune on the 13 LP's issued in the series, mainly because he feels that the Bing Crosby Club members did not adequately support the venture..... (the LP's produced were of a high quality with excellent sound, and it is anticipated that the CD's will be of the same or better quality - the covers on the LP's were excellent also) We would like to suggest to our members that they give some thought to buying this CD when it becomes available, and if need be, contact Bob Neate for further information, and hopefully our support & purchase of the disc will help John sell his 500 copies, and be able to go on with the project. Just imagine the years 1932-1936 on high quality CD's.... the mouth positively waters.